



**E-Newsletter** [www.house.gov/simpson](http://www.house.gov/simpson) **October 15, 2003**



*Congressman Simpson was pleased to attend an open house at William Howard Taft Elementary to recognize its award as a "No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School." He presented students with a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to congratulate the school. Pictured is Congressman Simpson and Taft Elementary Principal Dr. Susan Williamson and students Courtney Prescott, Austin Prohl and Josh Petty. For more information on "No Child Left Behind" and what it means to your child, check out <http://www.nclb.gov> or to look up test scores for your child's school, visit <http://www.sde.state.id.us/iri/PrincipalReports/>.*

## Message from Mike

Last week while in Boise, I saw a school that left me speechless. All I could say to the students and parents was, "Wow!" I had the privilege of attending an open house at Taft Elementary to honor its students, parents, teachers and administrators for the school's selection as a "No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School" by the U.S. Department of Education. The award recognizes schools with students from disadvantaged backgrounds that have dramatically improved. At the school, I saw students who love attending school and parents who if given the choice of private school, would still send their children to Taft. I saw a principal who changed a school that was known more for playground brawls, than tough academic standards. Thanks to a complete transformation in attitude, the school has made major academic improvements over the past three years, plus increased teacher and student morale. Only 214 schools nation wide received this award and Taft was the only Idaho school selected. Taft Elementary has shown dramatic increases in test scores. For instance, in 2001, only 33 percent of kindergartners were tested at grade level. Idaho Reading Indicator testing in Spring on 2003, shows 93 percent of kindergartners passing. First grade scores jumped from 17 percent passing the test two years ago, to more than 68 percent passing today. I'm proud of Taft Elementary and its accomplishments. I plan to take its story to Congress to use as model of what can be done to improve education one child at a time.

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## Weekly Website

Check out my redesigned webpage! It includes new features like an on-line D.C. tour request form, district profile and county map, hot legislative topics, an on-line survey and a list of my favorite books.

**<http://www.house.gov/simpson>**

## Federal Facts

Americans spend an average of 19 percent of their annual income on mortgage or rent, according to the Census Bureau.

### **Fun Fact:**

The average child laughs 400 times a day versus an adult who laughs 15 times a day.

## Idaho History Quiz

What Idaho town is known as the "trout capital of the world"?

Answer this question correctly and you'll be featured in next week's e-newsletter!

Last week's answer: The town of Mackay is known as the "top of Idaho."

## Quote of the Week

"There are many ways to measure success; not the least of which is the way your child describes you when talking to a friend." --Unknown

## House Passes Bill to Help Veterans Get Jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House of Representatives has approved legislation improving overall veterans benefits, including Congressman Mike Simpson's provision that provides military men and women stationed outside the US access to employment opportunities.

H.R. 2297 "Veterans Benefits Act" increases benefits for education and housing, while clarifying grant programs, burial requirements for Arlington National Cemetery and the definition of a Prisoner of War. As a legislative maneuver, many other veterans provisions were added to H.R. 2297 including, Simpson's bill, H.R. 2285, the "Servicemembers Overseas Outreach Act."

Simpson's portion of the "Veterans Benefits Act" mandates that the US Department of Labor place staff in overseas veterans' assistance offices, which are located on military installations, 90 days after the bill becomes law. According to Simpson's provision, the Department of Labor must place six people at overseas points in Europe and South East Asia. Like VA employees, Department of Labor employees could visit 20 to 25 bases to help servicemen and women find jobs.

"I'm grateful to the Veterans Committee for including my bill in this legislative package," Simpson said. "Hiring veterans is one of the best business decisions a company can make. In the military, men and women learn leadership skills, resourcefulness, teamwork, and the value of technology. Unfortunately, many of our veterans aren't being utilized in the workforce, especially when they return to the United States. By working through the Department of Labor, I'm confident that our veterans will find employment that fits their skills and employers will reap the benefits."

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## Judiciary Committee to Hold Hearing on 9th Circuit Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — House Judiciary, Courts Subcommittee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) has announced that Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson's bill to reorganize the massive Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals will be the focus of a House Judiciary Courts Subcommittee hearing October 21 at 2 p.m. in Room 2141 Rayburn Building.

The bill, the "Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judgeship and Reorganization Act of 2003" divides the U.S. Ninth Circuit into two circuits. It places California, Nevada and Arizona in the Ninth Circuit. Idaho, along with Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, Montana, Oregon, Washington and the Northern Mariana Islands would be grouped into a newly created Twelfth Circuit Court of Appeals. H.R. 2723 is a revised version of H.R. 1330 introduced by Simpson in March. The new bill responds directly to concerns addressed during a hearing on the issue in July 2002 by adding additional judges in the new Circuits.

As it currently stands, the Ninth Circuit is responsible for protecting the constitutional and federally protected rights of more than 50 million people. The Ninth Circuit serves 15 million more people than the next largest circuit and about 20 million more than the average jurisdiction of the other courts of appeal.

## *Lawmakers Urge Sale of US Wheat to Iraq*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Idaho Congressmen Mike Simpson and C.L. "Butch" Otter joined House colleagues from several other grain-producing states this week in urging the State Department to support efforts to sell American wheat to Iraq.

During the past 15 years under the Saddam Hussein regime, it was virtually impossible for American wheat to be exported to Iraq," a dozen members of the House of Representatives wrote in a letter to Marc Grossman, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs. "Now with a new democratic government evolving in Iraq, we would expect the Iraq government to make its wheat purchases as most other countries now do, based on quality, delivery and competitive prices in the world wheat market."

The lawmakers said they had learned of an opportunity under the United Nations Oil for Food Program for the sale of 60,000 metric tons of American wheat to Iraq this year. Such a sale, they wrote, would "enable American farmers to compete for Iraqi wheat requirements in 2004 and beyond."

The contract currently is allotted to Russian wheat through a Swiss brokerage, which has proposed to substitute American wheat if its scheduled delivery can be moved up from late 2004 to the next three months. The Russians have agreed, and members of Congress "strongly urge the State Department, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the Ministry of Trade in Iraq to accept this offer for an earlier delivery of the American wheat."

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## Simpson Supports Tax Credit Legislation for Farmers

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In an effort to keep farm land in production and encourage younger Americans to choose farming, Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson is cosponsoring legislation that gives farmers and ranchers greater tax breaks if they sell their land to other farmers.

The bill, "The Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Tax Incentive Act" (H.R. 2978), offers current farmers reductions in the capital gains rate when they sell their land. All farmers and ranchers would receive a rate reduction. Those who sell their land to beginning farmers and ranchers receive a bigger cut in the taxes. According to the bill:

- Producers who sell their agricultural land to a beginning farmer or rancher would receive a 100 percent reduction in their capital gains taxes.
- Producers selling their land that will be kept in agricultural production would receive a 50 percent reduction in their capital gains taxes.
- All agriculture producers selling their farm or ranch land would receive an automatic 25 percent reduction in their capital gains taxes - regardless to whom they sell their land, or for what purpose.

"The simple truth is America's farmers and ranchers are getting older and its getting harder and harder for young people to take their place," said Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson. "With the current agriculture climate, it's getting more and more difficult to make a living. By giving tax breaks to all farmers, especially those who help younger farmers start or grow their operations, I hope we can encourage agriculture as a career

## Simpson Supports Iraq Supplemental

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson, a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, today supported the Committee's passage of legislation providing \$64.7 billion in emergency funding for continued U.S. operations in Iraq. The legislation also contains \$18.6 billion for Iraqi relief and reconstruction – a \$1.7 billion decrease from the President's requested amount – and \$1.2 billion for similar activities in Afghanistan.

The Committee passed bill provides \$64.7 billion for national defense-related objectives including force protection and quality of life improvements for our soldiers abroad. It earmarks funds for the purchase of improved body armor and provides funding for the contracting of civilian security guards to replace reservists currently performing these duties at Army installations – a provision that would permit the demobilization of 7,000 to 10,000 reserve component soldiers. The bill also includes provisions to re-authorize and increase hazardous duty pay and family support programs.

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